23 October 2015

Dear young member,

November is Young Workers' Month

As we approach Young Workers' Month, we wanted to write and thank you for being one of our young activists. Your contribution to UNISON's work is vital, and never more so as we come under attack from a government hell-bent on ripping the heart out of trade unions.

Our priorities for Young Workers' Month

This year our top priorities for Young Workers' Month are campaigning for a real Living Wage, and raising the issue of how too many young workers are becoming subject to mental health problems at work. And, of course, we will use these issues to show why union membership and organisation is important and to encourage more young workers into membership.

Overleaf you can find out what you can do to help make Young Workers' Month a success. But before you get to that, we would like to tell you why mental health among young workers is a particular priority for us.

Young workers' mental health

It began when we started hearing individual stories of young members who were stressed at work and went on to become ill as a result of that stress. They talked about their workloads; they talked about bullying; and they talked about low pay and lack of training. But they also told us about how little support they had from their employers – and how that made their health even worse.

And we believe this is because mental health issues are not openly discussed, are subject to misunderstanding and often are simply ignored until it becomes too late.

Yet one in four people will experience mental health problems in any given year. And the problem is growing among young workers.

Our job as a union is to raise awareness of the issue with our members and employers; to negotiate with employers for proper policies and practices; and to support our members.

We are committed to this, and that's why we have made it a priority for Young Workers' Month. But that doesn't mean we can forget about it at the end of November. We know it is work that will have to continue, and we hope you will join us in making sure it is raised right across the union.

Once again, thank you for your commitment and support.

Dave Prentis
UNISON general secretary

Sinead Liddy
Chair
National young members forum

Andrew Anderson
Young members rep
NEC

UNISON YOUNG MEMBERS
EQUALITY

Young Workers' Month 2015 – Please play your part

Earlier this year UNISON's national conference agreed there should be an even bigger push to raise the profile of young members, calling on all branches to run at least one activity to help engage, recruit, and organise young workers.

And here are some things you can do to help with that effort:

- **Recruit a new member**

You can use the application form enclosed with this letter, or go to joinunison.org, or call 0800 171 2193

- **Wear the Young Workers' Month ribbon included with this letter**

And encourage others to wear one too! Even better, post pictures of yourself wearing your ribbon to our Facebook page 'Young members in UNISON' or on Twitter using the hashtag #ywm15

- **Ask your branch to commit to at least one Young Workers' Month activity**

It could be about one of our top priorities – the real Living Wage or young workers' mental health. Or perhaps apprenticeships, youth unemployment or affordable housing are important to your members locally?

You can find out more about the issues to help your branch organise an activity at: **www.unison.org.uk/YWM2015**

Whatever you decide to do – let us know and send your pictures through to the UNISON Facebook page or Twitter account.

- **Enter our 30-second film competition**

We are looking for 30-second films about why you joined UNISON, or why young workers should join UNISON – or in fact whatever you like about being a UNISON member.

The emphasis is on ideas and creativity and getting your point across rather than how professional they look.

Find out more at: www.unison.org.uk/YWM2015

UNISON YOUNG MEMBERS EQUALITY